20° from the *Zenith*: Out of these arose three beautiful Pyramids of Light, which extended very near the *Zenith*; the middle of these Pyramids were of a beautiful Sea-green, which went off gradually in lighter Shades towards the Edges, which were of a bright White; the Colour of these very much resembled the Light of *Phosphorus*. I observed these Columns for some Minutes, and then, going in a-doors, saw no more of the Phænomenon; and was told, half an Hour after, that it was all over; but have been informed since, that it returned again about Ten; when the Redness spread, almost universally, over the Southern Parts of the Heavens.

XXIV. *A Letter from Mr.* John Martyn, F.R.S. Prof. Botan. Cantab. *to* John Machin, *Esq*; Secr. R. S. *and* Prof. Astron. Gresham. *concerning an* Aurora Australis, *seen* March 18. 1738-9. *at* Chelsea, *near* London.

SIR,

I Now trouble you with a rude Account of the *Aurora Australis*, or what other Name you chuse to call it by, which was mentioned at the Society last *Thursday*.

Sunday, March 18. 1738-9. at half an Hour past Eight, being informed, That there was a great Fire towards *London*, I made haste towards an upper Window that looked to the North North-east: I found an extraordinary Redness in the Air, but of too determined

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termined a Figure to ariſe from the burning of a Houſe: A broad red Band extended itſelf to the Northward of the Eaſt; in the Middle of which I very plainly ſaw *Arcturus*, then about 25° high; and its Northern Edge touched *Cor Caroli*. It ſeemed to be fixed and permanent; not radiating, or fading, as in a common *Aurora Borealis*. This red Band, or Arch, was bounded on the North by Streams of a greeniſh Blue, in the ſame Direction; the moſt Northern Edge of which touched the Star marked η in the Tip of the Tail of *Urſa Major*. After I had conſidered this Phænomenon for ſome little time, I retired into my Garden, where I ſaw a great Brightneſs almoſt in the Zenith, but declining to the South-weſt; which I found to be a Centre, from which many luminous *Radii*, of which the red Band was much the moſt conſiderable, proceeded. This Crown, or Centre, ſeemed, at that time, as near as I could judge, about the Place of *Cancer*; for it effaced all the neighbouring Stars, and I could but juſt ſee two Stars, which I take to be thoſe in the Heads of the *Twins*; when the Brightneſs was moſt faded: It would ſometimes almoſt diſappear for near a Minute, and then kindle again, and dart Rays on all Sides; but thoſe to the Weſt and North were ſhort, pale, and ſoon diſappeared. Thoſe which ſhot Southward, were of a firy Red; and the whole Southern Part of the Atmoſphere was tinged with a red Brightneſs, which did not however reach quite down to the Horizon; for, to the South-weſt, where my Proſpect was leaſt confined, I could ſee *Sirius*, then about 15° high beyond the red Light. The Houſes oppoſite to mine hindered me from ſeeing, how far to the Eaſt and North-eaſt the

the red and blue Rays extended. All this while, the North and North-weſt Parts of the Heavens ſeemed dark, by reaſon of the great Brightneſs in the Eaſt and South: It was very clear however, and the Stars viſible. About Nine, the red Band had covered the Tail of *Urſa major*, having moved conſiderably towards the North, the Centre continuing in the ſame Place; and by degrees it faded ſo as not to be diſtinguiſhable from the common Redneſs which was ſpread over ſo conſiderable a Part of the Heavens. About Ten I went to the River-ſide, where I had a large Proſpect to the South-eaſt; and found all that Part covered with a dusky Red, quite down to the Horizon. There were afterwards ſome faint Rays darted, ſometimes from the Centre of this Phænomenon, which has the Appearance of a common *Aurora Borealis*. If you can gather any thing material from this Deſcription, it will be a Pleaſure to,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient

humble Servant,

John Martyn.